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midwifery education
accreditation council

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MEAC MEMBER SCHOOLS LETTER #15

Enforcement and monitoring of compliance with standards

December 11, 2015

Dear MEAC Member Schools:

In October 2015, a representative from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) observed a portion of MEAC's in-person board meeting. This is a routine element in the periodic renewal of MEAC's recognition by the USDE, similar to the site visits that MEAC periodically conducts with each of our member schools.

Based on feedback from the USDE representative, MEAC wants to ensure that all member schools understand MEAC's obligation, as a USDE-recognized accrediting agency, regarding **enforcing and monitoring** compliance with MEAC standards.

Enforcing Compliance with Standards

In accordance with federal regulations ([34 CFR §602.20](#)), MEAC must enforce its standards and timelines for addressing any deficiencies. Compliance issues are those where MEAC finds an accredited program or institution to be out of compliance with one or more MEAC standards. All findings of non-compliance trigger either immediate *adverse action*, or specification of an Expected Compliance Date (ECD) by which the program or institution must demonstrate remediation of the area of non-compliance. MEAC specifies Expected Compliance Dates on a case-by-case basis within USDE-specified maximums depending on program length. If the program or institution does not bring itself into compliance by the Expected Compliance Date, MEAC will then take immediate *adverse action* unless MEAC, for good cause, extends the period for achieving compliance.

Adverse action, as defined by the USDE, means "the denial, withdrawal, suspension, revocation, or termination of accreditation or preaccreditation, or any comparable accrediting action an agency may take against an institution or program." ([34 CFR §602.3](#))

Monitoring Compliance with Standards

In accordance with federal regulations ([34 CFR §602.19](#)), MEAC must apply monitoring and evaluation approaches that enable it to identify problems with an institution's or program's continued compliance with agency standards.

Monitoring, including requiring monitoring report(s), is not a finding of non-compliance. MEAC may require monitoring for reasons *including, but not limited to*:

- routine monitoring (such as annual reports)
- gathering additional information in cases where MEAC has concerns about possible non-compliance with one or more standards but does not have sufficient information to make a determination
- verifying continued compliance when a program or institution makes significant changes (whether or not those changes trigger a formal substantive change review).

MEAC's Commitment to Quality Improvement

As part of MEAC's process of ongoing quality improvement, we are committing to the following actions:

1. To provide each of our member schools with a report summarizing all current compliance and monitoring requirements for your institution/program to ensure that you understand your current compliance status (including Expected Compliance Dates) and any required reporting.
2. To clearly specify in future communications MEAC's expectations for compliance reporting versus monitoring reporting. (In the past, we have used the term "interim reports" for both types of reports.)
3. To review the sections of our policies and procedures addressing enforcement and monitoring of compliance with MEAC standards, and to make any needed revisions to ensure that our P&P is fully congruent with federal regulations and as clear as possible for our member schools, prospective member schools, and other stakeholders.

Please watch for your report, as well as updates on any P&P revisions, in the coming months. In the meantime, please contact me or MEAC staff if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Nichole Reding
President